



Nottinghamshire
Wildlife Trust

Idle Valley Nature Sightings

July 2024

Welcome

Welcome to this first edition of the monthly '**Idle Valley Nature Sightings**'. We hope you will enjoy the content. Please do contribute to this publication by either submitting your wildlife sightings and photo's, by joining in on any of the regular planned walks or events or by joining the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust as a member or volunteer via their online membership page. Please make use of the excellent Idle Valley café and wildlife shop which is to be found in the Idle Valley Learning Centre at the Bellmoor end of the reserve. Its open 7 days a week from 9:00am-4:00pm.

Idle Valley NR – A community for all!

What's On for August 2024.

Every Tuesday each month – **Wellbeing Walk** (Bellmoor Lake area) from the Cafe at 10:30am. Volunteer led walk.

Every Wednesday each month – **Wellbeing Walk** (Bellmoor Lake area) from the Café at 1:30pm. Volunteer led walk.

First Thursday in each month – **Adventure Walk** (minimum 8 miles) from the Café at 10:30am. Volunteer led walk.

Wednesday 28th August – **Gary's 'Wildlife & Birdwatching' Walk** meeting at 9:00am on Chainbridge Lane by the river bridge, this time general bird and wildlife watching around the area. Leader is Gary Hobson. Mobile:07464964879

Idle Valley Nature Reserve

Alex Morley (Reserves Manager North) - Further **Erosion** to the riverbank and subsequently to the riverside path at Bellmoor Lake has forced the relocation and installation of a new path next to the former path. The new deviation is awaiting Notts County Council to authorize the changes and make it an official Right of Way. The **Flooding** over the winter to the reserve has caused water levels to remain unusually high, which has effectively caused issues with many breeding birds, specifically to waders and terns. The Neatholme Fen area has a simple water drainage system installed which has failed and the ability to lower the levels has not been possible so far this year. It is hoped that with volunteer and reserve staff help, the problem will soon be solved so that the autumn wader passage may see this location become useful again as a 'stop off' for birds to feed and rest, during their often very long migration routes. **If you can volunteer to help with managing the Idle Valley NR, please contact the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.**

Harri Phillips (IVNR Wilder Officer) - July saw the launch of the successful **Idle Tots**, a series of free outdoor trails aimed at children between 2 to 4 years. This runs, alternate Wednesdays throughout the School holidays, the next dates are 14th & 28th August. A great way for your children to play in nature and make friends. This event is free, but booking is required and is not a drop off session, you will have to accompany your child (maximum two children per adult). To book contact hphillips@nottswt.co.uk or follow Harri Wilder on Facebook.

Birds recorded in June 2024.

June wasn't the quiet month it usually can be, far from it, with several great records including a first record for the site, and a totally unexpected vagrant, a **Black-winged Pratincole** found on the evening of the 19th. Up to three **Bittern** have been present this year so far and sightings in June were frequent, two were noted on the 1st, with singles noted on the 4th, 6th, 7th, 15th, 16th, 17th, two birds again on the 25th and finally another single on the 30th. A single **Great White Egret** was present on the 1st. Several pairs of **Egyptian Goose** were noted across the reserve with a pair

hatching young on the Lower Sheep Fields but only a single gosling remained on the 1st. A single **Dunlin** was noted at Bellmoor Lake briefly on the 1st. **Kingfisher** are resident at Idle Valley but very few were seen with just singles on the River Idle on the 1st & 16th and a single at Tiln Fishery on the 18th. A scarce summer migrant, a **Quail** was heard singing in a field just east of Tiln North on the 5th. A scarce bird of late, a single **Mistle Thrush** was noted feeding in the small field by Walters Farm Bungalow Pool on the 6th. Numbers of **Hobby** seen throughout the summer depends on weather and number of insects over the reserve, five were noted over Chainbridge Scrape on the 6th, further reports over this location included 7+ on the 13th, 4 on the 16th, 10 on the 17th, 6 on the 19th and finally two on the 21st. The **Turtle Dove**, though nationally scarce and in severe decline are still continuing to be a resident breeding species here at Idle Valley NR and were seen frequently throughout the month. A single was at Walters Farm on the 1st, singles along Walters Lane and at Neatholme Scrape on the 11th, two birds calling near Chainbridge Lane on the 13th, a single at Chainbridge Scrape on the 16th, single along Walters Lane on the 19th, a single at Tiln Pits on the 23rd, three birds (two 'purring' near Bittern Pools on the 24th, three different singles were 'purring' by Chainbridge Pit, Walters Farm and at Bellmoor on the 28th, a single at Walters Lane on the 29th and finally two birds were reported on the 30th. (© G.Hobson)



Another scarce visitor, a single **Common Crane** was heard calling east of the River Idle early morning on the 7th. A single **Little Tern**, a scarce passage migrant was found on Chainbridge Pit on the early afternoon of the 11th and remained here until 8pm that evening. The bird was 'colour-ringed' on its right leg (Yellow TK2) and is the same ringed individual that was present at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, on the afternoon of the 9th June before it flew off NE at 17:30pm. An interesting relocation and a nice inland find for what is regarded as a 'seabird'. When we get ringing data we can share it here in a future edition. (© David Read)



Single **Turnstone** and **Little Ringed Plover** (both scarce this year) were also noted with the Little Tern on Chainbridge Pit on the 11th. A nice report of three **Little Owl** (an adult & 2 chicks) that were ringed from a local nest box just outside the reserve on the 12th. (© M.Vickers) The number of **Cuckoo** seen this year seems to be above average and several reports were noted throughout the month with one or two birds noted on the 13th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 21st. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** have bred successfully this summer with a pair with two youngsters in tow, at the junction of Cross Lane/Neatholme Lane on the 16th, with a further single noted at Chainbridge Wood on the 28th. A small number of **Teal**, up to 6 birds (including 5 males), and generally a scarce bird over the summer, were noted at

Cross Lane Fishery around the 16th. **Little Egret** were noted in small numbers with two at Cross Lane Fishery on the 16th, a single at Chainbridge Pit on the 28th and four at Tiln North on the 30th. Just off the reserve in a nearby woodland 'clear fell', a single **Woodlark** was heard singing again on the 16th. Now becoming more commonly seen in Nottinghamshire, a single **Raven** was watched flying over Lound village on the 17th. A scattering of **Cattle Egret** reports including two birds at Tiln North/Chainbridge Lane/Chainbridge Scrape on the 18th, plus singles again at Tiln North on the 20th and 30th. Waders seemed to begin to be more notable from mid-month with a single juvenile **Redshank** on Chainbridge Pit on the 19th. A couple of **Green Sandpiper** were noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 20th, with a single there on the 30th. Single **Common Sandpiper** were also noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 20th, 28th and 30th. The most unexpected sighting this month, and probably the highlight this year, was a single **Black-winged Pratincole** that was photographed by the single observer, Jonathan Hird, who saw the bird fly over Chainbridge Lane towards Chainbridge Pit at 19:30pm on the 19th (© Jonathan Hird).



This is a rare bird nationally, it's the first record for Idle Valley NR, only the second record for Nottinghamshire and thankfully for many who didn't see it here on the reserve, was relocated at nearby Finningley Gravel Pits on the 29th June, staying there, on and off, until it relocated to Kilsea Wetlands on the East Yorkshire coast on 18th July, before moving north to a location near Bishop Auckland, County Durham on the 19th July. The **Common Tern** trying unsuccessfully to nest on the reserve this summer were seen in reasonable numbers, mainly around Chainbridge Pit with 7 there on the 21st, a good count of 30 on the 26th and 6 on the 30th. Duck numbers were generally usually low but counts of 50 **Pochard** (mainly males) were noted from Neatholme Scrape on the 21st and Chainbridge Pit on the 28th. Wader passage again noted later in the month with **Black-tailed Godwit** stopping to rest or feed on a few dates, including 13 birds on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 25th, with just five there on the 26th-27th and a further four dropped into Chainbridge Pit on the 28th. Another rare passage migrant/summer visitor, the **Osprey**, graced the reserve on the evening of the 25th, with a single noted flying from Bellmoor Lake. Gull watchers were lucky to spot single adult **Yellow-legged Gull** at Bellmoor Lake & Lower Sheep Fields & on the 28th, with four at the latter site on the 29th. A single 'intermedius' race **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was noted on the Lower Sheep Field on the 29th. A single **Red Kite** was noted over Tiln North on the 27th. Numbers of **Stock Dove** around Walters Lane/Farm were still in the c20 birds mark on the 28th, having been very high in number earlier this year. Numbers of **Collared Dove** were still low with just 7 birds noted at Walters Farm on the 28th. Two **Grey Partridge**, with very few around this year, were noted on Chainbridge Lane on the 29th.

G.Hobson, M.B.Vickers, A.Bell, W.Fiuk, S.Davenport, S.Hughes, V.Giles, P.Cadman, D.Housman, M.Lambert, Mel, I.D.Baxter, P.Hobson, E.Hobson, M.Fitzsimmons, P.Freeman, B.Usher, D.Read, I.Cowgill, Joe, L.Middleton, S.Parker, A.Blackburn, Lound Bird Club (Website), Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers (Website), Idle Valley Bird Sightings (Facebook), Lound & Idle Valley Bird News (What's App), Notts Bird News (What's App), Notts Rare & Scarce (What's App) plus Idle Valley Walks (What's App). Please submit bird sightings the above groups/pages or email to ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk

Butterflies & Moths recorded in June 2024.

The total recorded species of Butterfly within the Idle Valley NR and the local recording area stands at 31 species. Next month I will compile a spreadsheet of the species, the earliest and latest dates recorded during all years plus the highest daily numbers recorded. The bird walk on the 6th saw several **Yellow Shell** moths seen in the grassy rides around Tiln Pits and the Sheep Fields (© G.Hobson). A report of 30+ **Emperor Moth** caterpillars in bramble at Neatholme Scrape viewpoint on the 9th was great news, a species that isn't common anywhere in Nottinghamshire, though none were present just a week later? (© S.Davenport)



A **Lunar Hornet** moth was noted at Chainbridge Scrape (East) viewing screen at midday on the 20th. A walk around the woodland Trail at Bellmoor on the 23rd found several **Clouded Border** moths darting in and out of the path side Nettles (© G.Hobson). A single **Small China Mark** 'Micro' moth was photographed near the centre building on the 25th (© K.A.Ward).



(G.Hobson, S.Davenport, K.Roberts, A.Bell, S.Hughes K.A.Ward, P.Cadman)

Amphibians recorded in June 2024.

The reserve's resident **Marsh Frogs** are very noisy right now, with the males vocalising loudly via their air sacks on the sides of their heads. Here are a couple of images taken on the reserve on the 19th which clearly shows how these sacks fill with air prior to the calls being given. (© M.McCallum)



A single **Grass Snake** was seen crossing Chainbridge Lane on the 21st. (M.McCallum, Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers)

Dragonflies & Damselflies.

The following list contains all known Dragonfly and Damselfly species recorded within the Idle Valley NR and the local recording area. It was provided by Phil Cadman who records and manages the huge LBC/IVNR Entomology Database. There has been a total of 21 species recorded and the interesting part of this spreadsheet is the earliest/latest sighting dates and the highest daily No's of each species. As we go forward, we can monitor both the common and scarce/rare species and help Phil compile a thorough record of sightings every year.

Vernacular Name	Taxon	Earliest Sighting	Latest Sighting	Highest Daily No's
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	May 6th	September 17th	287
Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	May 18th	October 3rd	4
Willow Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes (Chalcolestes) viridis</i>	July 6th	November 26th	12
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	April 19th	October 25th	16
Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>	April 26th	July 8th	50
Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	June 24th	August 2nd	5
Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	May 7th	August 11th	492
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	April 22nd	October 17th	6375
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	May 5th	September 17th	760
Common Hawker	<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	July 10th	September 3rd	35
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	June 15th	November 17th	153
Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanaea</i>	June 18th	October 14th	10
Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	June 18th	October 22nd	34
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	May 26th	October 6th	6
Hairy Dragonfly	<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	April 20th	July 8th	9
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	April 29th	August 6th	17
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	May 28th	August 8th	4
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	May 17th	September 26th	26
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	May 25th	December 1st	256
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	June 30th	September 27th	5
Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	July 9th	September 17th	20

Banded Damoiselle Gallery.



Male on left (© K.Beaumont) & **Female** on right (© G.Hobson), both Idle Valley NR, June 2024.



Male above, July 2024. (© K.A.Ward) Obvious different colours in differing sunlight angles!

Identification Guide.



*The above two images, taken previously on Idle Valley NR, are just for reference to help with identification of male **Common Blue Damselfly** (left) and **Azure Damselfly** (Right). The main obvious difference is the thickness of the blue 'antehumeral' stripe on the black upper thorax, broad in the Common Blue and narrow in the Azure with the Azure also having an extra black line 'a spur' extending from the wing base, yet absent from the Common Blue Damselfly. (© G.Hobson) (P.Cadman, G.Hobson)*

Spiders & other Insects in June 2024.



*Top left – **Nursery Web Spider** (© G.Hobson) Top right – Unknown **Spider?** (© G.Hobson)*

*Bottom left – **Cardinal Beetle** (© G.Hobson) Bottom right – **Pellucid Hoverfly** (© S.Davenport)*



Flora in June 2024.

The Idle Valley NR has amongst its large array of wildlife several hundred types of flowers, Grasses, shrubs and trees and over the years this has been recorded by several local wildlife experts and enthusiasts. It would be great to create a new working checklist of the reserve's flora. Something to work on in the near future, and an update to the existing historical data already on file. Visitors to the reserve can see many species of flowers throughout the year, and lots of colour is to be enjoyed by all who look for it. Local pollinators also rely on these flowers for food and many species can be associated with certain types, especially in the summer with bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies, beetles, flies, wasps and so on, are all seen on these flowers. In turn, these pollinators keep the flowers alive to return again year on year.



Above left – **Bee Orchid**. Centre – **Southern Marsh Orchid**. Above right – **Marsh Woundwort** (© G.Hobson)

Late Spring and Midsummer is great for Orchids on the Idle Valley NR, and most are found in grassy and sunny, often south facing locations. June this year saw many **Bee Orchid** and **Southern Marsh Orchid** both recorded in abundance. A walk on the central area of the reserve on the 6th June recorded a grand total of 46 **Bee Orchids** along the Tiln Wood Circular path, most of which is south facing. Orchids come in many forms and colours, but the flowers of the orchid are sometimes mimicked by other native species, one in particular is **Marsh Woundwort** *Stachys palustris* (see image above) which, though in the Mint family and within the genus Hedgenettles, it clearly has 'orchid' type flowers which also attract bees and other pollinators. (S.Hughes, A.Bell, G.Hobson, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday Walking Groups)

Ladybirds.



Above images – These three **Harlequin Ladybirds** are an invasive species and are now well established. They are extremely variable, with well over 100 colour variations. (©M. McCallum)

Summer – a time to flourish.



Above image – Two pairs of **Canada Geese** with their goslings on the River Idle, 4th June 2024 (© M.Barley)

In next month's issue.

Updated Events & Reserve News + All July's Bird News + Snails found on the Idle Valley NR + Full Butterfly List & Useful Data + Another Identification Guide + Flowers + Insects + Dragonflies & Damselflies and much more.....